

Indic Grand Narrative

By Sujit Mahapatra



First of all **what is grand narrative**? It is nothing but an overview of your nation. What your nation is, what it represents, how does it contribute to this world? Most progressive nations of this world have a grand narrative that is established over the years both internally across the nation and externally to the world. For an example, the grand narrative of USA is that it is a liberal democratic country that played a pivotal role in world wars to defeat the Nazis and is world leader in technology and innovations. Germans are known for their engineering capabilities, British for their colonialism and so on.

Why is **Grand Narrative Important**? It is important both nationally and internationally. Outside a nation, it plays part of what people think about your country, about you. It matters of the first impression that you bear when you meet someone for the first time. It matters when someone decides to come to your nation for vacation or for business. Internally its effects are even more significant. It is important for the self-confident you carry with you, the self-respect that you have. Your national grand narrative that you share with people around you and forms part of your psychology.

What is the **current Grand Narrative of India**? How it came to be? Many of you will agree that the current narrative that India has is that it is a developing country full of poverty and corruption. India's cities are over-crowded chaotic and dirty. Taj Mahal is the best monument of India and Gandhi, Nehru gave India Independence.

Now some of the points, which defines our Grand Narrative, are based on facts, but not all of them. Moreover, it's the dimensions that are used to define this is carefully thought out and executed. For an example. You can define an elephant by a '*black animal which walks on four legs*'. You can't say it's incorrect BUT it's inaccurate. It does not represent the elephant in the way it should be represented. Now how does the '*biggest living land mammal*' sound to you?

India's Grand Narrative was started by the Arabs, Then by the British. But since Britain was ruling over India when the world modernization started, it is the most prevalent. The British started this in a thoughtful and elaborate way back in mid 19th century around the time of the 1st war of Independence or the Sepoy Mutiny as termed by them. Many 'Indian History' books were written in this timeframe wherein Pre-Islam era India was squeezed as much as possible. The reason given then was the lack of (!) indigenous text to construct history in details. However, Islamic rule in India was mentioned in painstaking details, especially Mughal era. 'Hindus' were presented as corrupt, superstitious and weak race. Muslim atrocities like mass genocide, destruction of temples were glorified. This was mostly done because the British were doing the exact same thing that early Islamic invaders did, to loot and rule. How can one thief not glorify the other?

Most unfortunate part is that when India got its 'Independence' the full credit of independence was given to Gandhi and Nehru. Although Gandhi did play a part with his Quit India Movement, but that unfortunately is not the ONLY reason the British left India. The reason was a combination of their inability to control a vast area of the globe, growing intolerance of Indians toward foreign rule, Subhas Bose's INA campaign, and the Indian Navy Mutiny. But the narrative of Gandhi, Nehru giving us Independence not only helped Congress to rule over India but also gave a respectable reason for the

British to leave India. The Communist influence on India's political and education system in 1970s and 80s further deteriorated the grand narrative.

What **should be the Grand Narrative of India**? When millions of Indians like myself travel abroad, we have a rather subdued personality, mostly because of our grand narrative that we carry with us. But once you interact with people outside of India they have a very different perspective of Indians as a community. Indians are accepted in most part of the world as hard working, simple, intelligent people. In simple words, they are 'Nice guys' that are respected by most! Now how come a country with such negative grand narrative can have so many good guys? The reason is simple, our grand narrative is inaccurate and does not represent the actual India, both Within India and outside.

Some points to consider for building **the Narrative**,

- Ancient India before the dark-ages of Islamic invasions started was very developed and wealthy nation. India had around a quarter of world's GDP.
- Hindu is not a religion it's a large section of people that live in indian subcontinent and mostly follow '*Sanatana Dharma*'.
- Dharma itself does not translate to religion. Dharma is a set of thing you 'ought to do' like respecting your parents, loving your child, taking care of your family etc. Sanatana Dharma does not have a single holy book that everyone follows, but we have many. Sanatana Dharma does not follow a single god but many gods and goddesses. So why would someone teach the Hindus to be *secular*? Hasn't India already debunked the 2-Nation theory created by British and used by Jinnah to form Pakistan?
- The reason India's economy crashed during British rule can better be left to economists to analyze but in my opinion it was mostly due to India not keeping pace during industrial revolution under British Occupation. Furthermore, the British took around 45 Trillion Dollars (worth in today's currency value) of raw materials, gold, artifacts from India during their rule.

- Indians are one of the most tolerant and resilient human beings on planet earth. They mostly survived centuries of religious prosecutions and tyranny. We do not need advice from others on how to be tolerant.
- Indians are genetically intelligent, good in mathematics and memorizing. The Indian gene is mostly the same across India; *Aryan Invasion Theory* is already debunked. The *Rakhigarhi* discoveries is already proving all Indians have same gene and had the same gene thousands of years back. Then why should we have this caste, color differences?
- India has grown significantly after Independence, especially after liberating its market in 1990s.
- India is growing in sectors like IT, Pharmaceuticals, Space and Defense fields among many. Indians have the natural ability of doing more with fewer resources.
- India WILL become a leading economic power in the world soon. More importantly, India will become the spiritual super-power of the world.
- The name '*India*' itself comes from Hindu, Which come from Sindhu and does not mean '*Bharat*' that is mentioned in ancient texts like Mahabharata covering all parts of present day India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and beyond.

It is time now to know your past and construct your future accordingly. It is time to understand that Taj Mahal is not the only great monument in India there is Modhera Sun Temple as well. It is time to pick your heroes based on facts and tell your child how great we were and what we can become. Chances are, your child will be more successful and a better human being.

References:

- Abridgment History Of India by Marshman, John Clark, 1873
- History of Orissa by Sterling, Andrew, 1846
- The Indian Grand Narrative, Rajiv Malhotra, 2018 <https://youtu.be/iQMzRf1vEWg>
- British took \$45 trillion out of India in 200 years: S Jaishankar, 2019 <https://bit.ly/2KHmLag>